

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 121500Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9415

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0080

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

1. CHARGE HAD PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
CHNOUPEK AT NEW YEAR'S VIN D'HONNEUR CEREMONY HELD AT
THE FOREIGN MINISTRY JANUARY 12.

2. CHARGE SAID WE WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING
JOHANNES AS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. CHNOUPEK
SAID JOHANNES WAS HIS PERSONAL PICK AND HE EXPECTED
THE AMERICANS WOULD BE VERY PLEASED WITH HIM. HE
SAID THAT AS HE TOLD AMBASSADOR SHERER AT UNGA, THE
DELAY IN PICKING A SUCCESSOR TO SPACIL WAS ABSOLUTELY
NON-POLITICAL AND WAS DUE SOLELY TO HIS OWN INSISTENCE ON A
CAREFUL SEARCH TO FIND THE RIGHT MAN. HE EXPECTED
JOHANNES BACK FROM OTTAWA ON JAN 26 OR SO, AND THEN WOULD SEND
HIM TO WASHINGTON AFTER THREE OR FOUR WEEKS OF BRIEFING.
CHARGE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD INFORMALLY THAT PROCESS WAS WELL
ALONG TOWARDS PICKING OUR NEW AMBASSADOR, AND WE
HOPED TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS CONCRETELY IN
THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE.

3. CHARGE TOOK OCCASION TO THANK CHNOUPEK AND THROUGH
HIM GOC FOR POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON DIVIDED FAMILIES
AND ON RECENT INDICATION OF PROGRESS ON
US LIST. CHNOUPEK WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE
AND SAID HE HAD BEEN GLAD TO SEE THIS TAKE PLACE.

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HE CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THAT FROM WHAT HE HEARD

FROM ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPT MFA) ABOUT LATTER'S CHATS WITH US CHARGE AND OTHERS, PROSPECTS FOR MAJOR CHANGE IN US-CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION WAS NOT LIKELY PRIOR TO US ELECTIONS. CHARGE REPLIED THAT TO BE REALISTIC, HE HAD TO AGREE. CHARGE ADDED THERE WAS STILL SOME HOPE THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS MIGHT YIELD SOME FRUIT PRIOR TO ELECTIONS, BUT THIS WAS A SLIM HOPE, AND MOST REALISTIC EXPECTATION WAS FOR A WAITING PERIOD UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

4. CHNOUPEK THEN ASKED ABOUT SOME OF THE DISTURBING REPORTS HE HAD BEEN HEARING LATELY ABOUT ATTACKS ON SECRETARY KISSINGER AND ON US POLICY OF DETENTE. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY REGRETTED THESE ATTACKS ON THE SECRETARY AND ON DETENTE VERY MUCH. CHARGE SAID HE APPRECIATED CHNOUPEK'S REMARKS, AND SHARED THE REGRET. CHARGE SAID TO BE VERY FRANK, HE FEARED WE WOULD HEAR THE TONE OF DEBATE IN THE US GET WORSE BEFORE IT GOT BETTER, AND WE MIGHT BE IN FOR A ROUGH YEAR. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONVINCED THAT DETENTE-- NOT ONLY WITH USSR BUT ALSO WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA-- WAS THE LASTING US COMMITMENT, AND HE FELT WHOEVER WAS PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY OF STATE NEXT YEAR WOULD SUPPORT THAT COMMITMENT IN THE LONG RUN.
PERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PRAGUE00080
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760011-1164
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760166/aaaacgky.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <13 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
TAGS: PFOR, CZ, US, (CHNOUPEK, BOHUSLAV), (JOHANNES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006